

registered agent, CT Corporation System, at 289 South Culver St., Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This Court has federal question jurisdiction over Plaintiff's Fair Debt Collection Practices Act ("FDCPA"), 15 U.S.C. § 1692, et seq., claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 15 U.S.C. § 1692k(d). This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

4. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because, inter alia, Defendants frequently and routinely conducts business in the State of Georgia, including the conduct complained of herein.

5. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391, venue is proper in the Middle District of Georgia because a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claims occurred in this district.

6. Venue is proper in the Valdosta Division because the conduct complained of herein occurred in Colquitt County which is in the Valdosta

Division. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

7. Plaintiff is a 56-year-old woman with deteriorating health. She is disabled, unable to engage in competitive employment, and is in the process of obtaining disability insurance benefits through the Social Security Administration.

8. Plaintiff is allegedly obligated to pay a consumer debt arising out of a credit card issued by Capital One Bank (USA), NA, that was utilized by the Plaintiff for the purchase of ordinary goods and services and is therefore, a “consumer”, as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(3).

9. Defendant is a collection agency specializing in the collection of consumer debt.

10. Defendant uses interstate commerce and/or mail in its business in the collection of consumer debts.

11. Defendant manages, and collects upon, thousands of consumer debt accounts annually.

12. Defendant is, therefore, a “debt collector” as that term is defined by 15 U.S.C. § 1692a(6).

13. As a result of the Plaintiff’s inability to maintain competitive employment she has fallen behind on several consumer accounts including the Capital One account referenced above.

14. Capital One retained the services of Defendant to pursue collection of the balance of the account which was \$850.37. On August 18th, 2020 the Defendant caused to be sent to the Plaintiff a letter demanding payment of the above-referenced debt.

15. The Defendant's letter contained highly sensitive and personal information related to the Plaintiff, including a) the Plaintiff's name and address; b) the name of the Plaintiff's creditor; c) that the Plaintiff had a debt; d) the exact amount alleged to be owed; e) that the debt was in default; and f) that the debt was being collected by a collection agency.

16. The letter received by the Plaintiff shows an Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) just above the address of the Plaintiff. A copy of this letter with the IMB code highlighted for ease of reference is filed herewith as Exhibit 1. (Plaintiff's personal information has been redacted)

17. IMBs are used by the United States Postal Service and contain information that includes the name and other identifying information of the actual sender of the item.

18. The IMB displayed on the collection letter received by the Plaintiff, when decoded, reveals that the sender was not the Defendant, but rather Dantom Systems Inc., of Livonia, Michigan.

19. The Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that the Defendant communicated the personal information regarding the Plaintiff and her debt to Dantom Systems Inc. in connection with the debt being collected and for the express purpose of facilitating that collection.

20. The transmission of this information by the Defendant was an invasion of the Plaintiff's privacy.

21. Without the prior consent of the consumer given directly to the debt collector, or the express permission of a court of competent jurisdiction, or as reasonably necessary to effectuate a post judgment judicial remedy, a debt collector may not communicate, in connection with the collection of any debt, with any person other than the consumer, his attorney, a consumer reporting agency if otherwise permitted by law, the creditor, the attorney of the creditor, or the attorney of the debt collector. 15 U.S.C. § 1692c(b).

INJURIES-IN-FACT

22. The FDCPA provides consumers with “statutorily-created rights to be free from ‘being subjected to false, deceptive, unfair, or unconscionable means to collect a debt.’” *McCamis v. Servis One, Inc.*, No. 8:16-CV-1130-T-30AEP, 2016 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 99492 (M.D. Fla. July 29, 2016); *Church v. Accretive Health, Inc.*, 654 Fed. Appx. 990, 2016 U.S. App. LEXIS 12414, 2016 WL 3611543 (11th Cir. 2016).

23. An injury-in-fact sufficient to satisfy Article III standing requirements “may exist solely by virtue of statutes creating legal rights, the invasion of which creates standing.” *Church*, at 993, quoting *Havens Realty Corp. v. Coleman*, 455 U.S. 363, 373, 102 S. Ct. 1114, 71 L. Ed. 2d 214 (1982).

24. Violation of statutory rights are not a “hypothetical or uncertain” injury, but one “that Congress has elevated to the status of a legally cognizable injury through the FDCPA.” *McCamis*, at 4, citing *Church*, at 3.

25. Defendant is subjecting Plaintiff to unfair means to collect the debt.

26. The Defendant’s communication of the Plaintiff’s personal information violated a clear statutory right and was an invasion of Plaintiff’s individual privacy.

DAMAGES

27. As a result of the Defendant’s actions and/or omissions, Plaintiff has suffered actual damages, including but not limited to the following:

- a.) Being subjected to unfair debt collection practices;
- b.) Uncompensated time expended away from activities of daily living, to confer with counsel regarding the Defendant's collection efforts;
- c.) The Plaintiff suffered a violation of her right to privacy.
- d.) Defendant would continue to disseminate private and sensitive information to third parties. The anxiety and worry experienced by the Plaintiff was sufficient to negatively affect her demeanor, her ability to engage in daily activities, resulted in sleeplessness, and adversely affected her relationships with others.

CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I

VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. § 1692 et. seq.

Violations of 15 U.S.C. § 1692c and subparts

28. Defendant's communication of Plaintiff's personal information to Dantom Systems Inc. as described herein was a violation of 15 U.S.C. § 1692c(b). See, *Hunstein v. Preferred Collection and Management Services, Inc.*, No. 19-14434 (11th Cir. April 21, 2021)

COUNT II

**VIOLATIONS OF THE GEORGIA FAIR BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT
O.C.G.A. § 10-1-390, et seq.**

29. Plaintiff incorporates by reference paragraphs 1 through 28 as though fully stated herein.

30. O.C.G.A. § 10-1-390 et seq is commonly known as the "Fair Business Practices Act of 1975" (the "GFBPA").

31. The purpose of the GFBPA, is to protect consumers from unfair and/or deceptive practices in the conduct of any trade or commerce in part or wholly in the state. O.C.G.A. § 10-1-391.

32. O.C.G.A. § 10-1-391 directs that the GFPBA is to be interpreted and applied liberally and in harmony with the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a)(1), which implements the FDCPA.

33. O.C.G.A. § 10-1-393(a) of the GFBPA broadly prohibits unfair and/or deceptive business practices.

34. Defendant intentionally engaged in unfair and deceptive business practices, as set forth herein, in an effort to collect a consumer debt.

35. Defendant's conduct has implications for the consuming public in general.

36. Defendant's conduct negatively impacts the consumer marketplace.

37. Upon information and belief, Defendant does not maintain a place of business in Georgia and has no assets in Georgia, thus relieving Plaintiffs of the Notice and Demand requirements of O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(b).

38. As a result of Defendant's violations of O.C.G.A. § 10-1-393(a), Plaintiff is entitled to recover general damages pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(a).

39. As a result of Defendant's intentional violations of O.C.G.A. § 10-1-393(a), Plaintiff is entitled to recover exemplary damages pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(a).

40. As a result of Defendant's intentional violations of O.C.G.A. § 10-1-393(a), Plaintiff is entitled to recover treble damages pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(c).

41. Plaintiff is entitled to recover reasonable attorney's fees and expenses of litigation pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(d).

TRIAL BY JURY

42. Plaintiff is entitled to and hereby requests a trial by jury.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that judgment be entered against Defendant for:

- a.) Plaintiff's actual damages;
- b.) Statutory damages pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k;
- c.) Reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k
- d.) General, exemplary, and treble damages pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(a) & (c);
- e.) Reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-1-399(d); and
- f.) Such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

Respectfully submitted this 9th day of August, 2021.

BERRY & ASSOCIATES

/s/ Matthew T. Berry

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